Three weeks ago, I was in the pick-up line, moving slow like you do, when the front door of the school flew open and Christina ran over to my car and tapped on my window. I rolled it down, and she said breathlessly, “David, the POPA dinner is coming up and we’re looking for speakers. We’re looking for the perfect Montessori couple, with two outstanding Montessori kids. Well, we found them, but they won’t be able to come to dinner. Sooooo, we thought we’d relax our requirements a bit. Then Mirani had an idea. She said, ‘Why don’t we just take the next car that comes around the corner, and ask them?’ And it was you, David.”
Then she said, “What we’d like you and Jeannine to do is talk about Post Oak School “extras” for parents. You’d only have to talk maybe three to five minutes.”

I thought, only 3 to 5 minutes? That’s not very long. Jeannine could do that! So, I accepted on Jeannine’s behalf. Later, at home, I told Jeannine about the speaking opportunity I had signed her up for. She said, and she is very good at this, “David, let me be perfectly clear: I will be at the dinner, but you will be at the podium.” So, here I am.

Picture this: Fifteen kids at a party, each with a delicious cupcake in front of them. Then three of them are given ice cream too, and cookies and whipped cream, and cherries on top, and those little toys you get at restaurants. What do you think would be the reaction of the twelve other kids? If they’re Montessori kids, of course they would be thrilled at the good fortune of the three lucky kids, but if they’re like the rest of the world, their more likely reaction would be: “Hey, wait a minute! Why don’t I get that too?” I must admit, I have been in situations like that myself, and that has been my response. Well, the wonderful education your kids are getting at The Post Oak School is like the wonderful cupcakes. The ice cream and cookies are the many extras available to you, the parents at the school, that are only sparsely taken advantage of.

We have about 496 parents at Post Oak, and many of these functions are attended by only 15 to 20 parents. That means that 476 of you are missing out on some really great “ice cream and cookies,” that are yours to be had! Now I know that many of you work, and can’t make day-time functions, but some of them are at night and on weekends. Let me tell you about them.

I’m going to talk about six or seven of them. Many of you here will know about them already, and if so, all you will lose is 3 to 5 minutes of listening to me talk. If you haven’t heard of them though, you’ll learn about some really wonderful things at the school, and if you attend some of them, all the better!

The first one that comes to mind is F.I.S.H.: Families Integrating School and Home. Paula Mey spent a year putting this program together, and then last year put it into action. We meet once a month, and learn from one or two teachers how we might put some of their great Montessori practices into use at home too. And not only from them; we also share among us parents Montessori ideas that work, and how to put them into practice at home. In our house, we have a little corner table and shelf in our living room, where we collected and keep all of our musical instruments, the music corner; and we got the idea at a F.I.S.H. meeting.

Another good one is what we call “Jeff’s coffee hour,” but I think the real name is something like Coffee with the Elementary School Director, run by Jeff Schneider. He tells us about the lessons that our children are taught in The Post Oak School, and often demonstrates them to us, as if we were his students. We learn how the learning process works using Montessori methods. The Q&A at the end is valuable and lots of fun. Every time we sit there, though, 20 or so of us, I always think, “What a shame that 476 parents are missing this!”...

Graduation night in the spring, is a fantastic evening that any of you can partake of. You don’t have to wait until your own child reaches eighth grade to go to a graduation ceremony. It is very, very inspirational to hear these graduates give their speeches, and confirms why we have our children in the school. It is hard to believe how mature and moving they can be, all because of their great founding at Post Oak School. At such a tender age, they already sound like Senators and Congressmen...oops!, maybe that was a bad example. They’re better than Congressmen!

continued on page 8
October is Post Oak Fund Month. This first week, 61 families have already contributed...thank you! A gift from every family is important to reach our $250,000 goal. These funds help the school maintain its level of excellence. Pledges can be paid at the end of the school year. You can contribute online by going to the school’s website. Thanks in advance for your support.

Christina Kopanidis-Cantu
Development Director
Direct: 281-822-8024

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The Binomial Cube
Key to the Universe

Presented by Jim Fitzpatrick with assistance from Ben Rawlings, Nina Schaeffer, and Jada Olayemi

Sunday, Oct. 10, 1:15 pm PDT*
www.tedxamericanriviera.com

AMI-Montessori teacher, Jim Fitzpatrick, will present "The Binomial Cube—Key to the Universe," Sunday, Oct. 10, during the TEDx event in Santa Barbara, CA. Fitzpatrick will have three children from Santa Barbara Montessori School demonstrate three different activities with Montessori's Binomial Cube. The live webcast's global audience is estimated to be 3-5 million viewers!

"By extension," continues Fitzpatrick, "the binomial’s algebraic formula directly prepares the child for further exploration in algebra, physics, chemistry, and therefore, its role as a key to the universe!"

Join the worldwide audience by logging on to the above website to see this uniquely modern presentation.

*Time approximate; It’s live theater!
Field Day 2010

Saturday, October 16 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Please join us Saturday, October 16th, from 10 am-1 pm for Field Day! Field Day is a wonderful, community event where you can bring the whole family, bring a picnic, and have some fun with the whole Post Oak community. The Mystery Boxes will be raffled off during the event, and there will be some exciting and fun prizes awarded during the day. So please bring your friends and family, and join us on October 16th!

Activities
• 4 inflatable play areas
• an infant play area
• a steel drum band
• face painting
• a cake walk
• Splash ‘Em water event
• a butterfly and insect exhibit from HMNS
• animals from the Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
• and a 6-foot tall Earth Ball!

Field Day Tips
• Be green—bring your own water bottles.
• Parking will be available on Episcopal High School’s driveway and side parking lot behind our field
• Bring a picnic!
• Wear your Field Day t-shirts (which will be distributed next week)!
• Rain or shine!
underwriting

Gala Underwriting letters have been mailed. Please thoughtfully consider your support of the school and participation in this biennial major fundraising event. Underwriters of $1000+ are invited to a special Cocktail Reception in January.

ways to donate

Not enough time to volunteer for this year’s Gala? You can still help by making a donation. The Auction Committee is looking for:

- Frequent flyer miles
  *(any amount, any airline)*
- Club card points
  *American Express, Diners Club, Rice Epicurean, etc.*
- Hotel chain rewards
- Private golf club access
  *round of golf for two or more*
- Napa/Sonoma winery
  *access to private tours, restaurants & hotels*
- Vacation homes
- Working Texas ranches

Other ideas? Just give us a call. Please contact Paula Mey

support the gala

There are many ways to support the Gala.

If you would like to buy an ad for the gala program, there is a wide range of price options available. Contact parent Renée Locklar or drop by the development office to pick up an advertising form. Individual family ads are welcome!

Support the gala through program advertising with:

- family ads
- business ads
- commercial ads

Your ad will be seen by 500 families and friends of Post Oak both in the program and online on the gala page.
SCENES
from
The Post Oak School

2. A lesson on plant care in Primary.
3. Reading about Egypt in a library rocking chair.
4. Skipping around the cones in PF.
5. “This one has sharp teeth!”
6. Reducing fractions to their lowest term with factors in Upper Elementary.
7. Thinking about the nuts and bolts of Primary.
Families Integrating School & Home

Please join us for our first presentation this year!

Friday, October 15, 9:00–10:00 am
in the Common Room

“Freedom within Limits”
presented by Sarah Moudry & Mirani Smith

Join Families Integrating School and Home (F.I.S.H.) group for parents of children in the Infant Community and Primary classes. F.I.S.H. is a parent group focused on helping families create their own Montessori environment at home with the guidance of experts and ideas generated by parents. We meet for a discussion guided by one of the teachers or an expert. It is an opportunity for parents to come together, share ideas, receive feedback, put it into practice, and benefit from the rewards.

Field Day mystery box tickets on sale

Raffle tickets are on sale in the Development Office next week and will be available in the dismissal line.

This festive and free family event is paid for by ticket sales for the Mystery Box raffle. Thanks to all families who have contributed to the box contents! Mystery boxes are on display in the front lobby.

Race to Nowhere

Screening in the Post Oak gym on Friday, November 12 at 6:30 pm

Make your plans to attend this eye-opening film.

Post Oak School will host a screening of this critically acclaimed film about the pressures faced by American schoolchildren and their teachers in a system and culture obsessed with the illusion of achievement. The film will be followed by a panel discussion. Every parent should have an interest in seeing this film and being a part of the conversation.

For more information about the film and to see the trailer, go to www.racetonowhere.com/about-film
Alumni night gives you similar feelings. These are young people who have moved on to high school, and in some cases college, and come back to share how their years at The Post Oak School have helped them after they have left. Again, very, very inspirational; truly amazing kids!

And now, I just want to mention one last Montessori treat, that is really directed to just a few of you. I’m talking to those of you who at drop-off or pick-up time come north on Ave B up to the entry gate, instead of south, from Fournace. When you get to the gate, and see the long line of cars coming south from Fournace, you kind of do a little wave, and “Can I cut in?”, and of course, someone always lets you in. What you are missing is a feeling shared by all those parents coming south, the wonderful Montessori feeling of doing things the right way. And it’s not just that, you’ll also miss the feeling they all share of letting someone in without having any feelings of animosity; oh, what a great Montessori feeling! You don’t know what you’re missing... why not join us?

Montessori and The Post Oak School: how good does it get?

And now Jeannine will talk about three of her favorite “extras,” so let me turn it over to my better half, my sweetheart, and the best wife I’ve ever had, Jeannine Bergt!

The following words belong to Jeannine Bergt from the 2010 POPA Annual Welcome Dinner that took place September 14.

Good evening. I am pleased (terrified) to have this opportunity to express my love for Post Oak and the wonderful banquet of parenting information and support laid out before us. Thank you Christina for the invitation.

I trust my fear of public speaking will recede as I focus on my gratitude to Post Oak. David is our speaker of the house. After this evening I can put P.S. after my name as a “public speaker” – P.S. also standing for Post Script to my long life - as we parent another generation.

We started shortly after our marriage in 1982 to partner with young parents unable to parent due to tragic circumstances, resulting in the placement of children and infants in our home. You can imagine the pleasure we experienced when we arrived in the fertile soil of The Post Oak School. You, the parents of Post Oak have been truly an awesome inspiration to us in your desire to learn the Montessori methods. You are the miracle that makes our new adventure in parenting so interesting, intriguing and fun. Thank you!

I first heard the words Post Oak Montessori at a Houston Swim Club swim class for our then 2-year-old child. She is now eight! A mother simply glowed when speaking about the school her daughter attended. We didn’t exchange names and her face has faded from memory, but my heart continues to thank her. Thank you, if you are here tonight.

Maria Montessori often used the phrase “follow the child.” David and I hear Post Oak say “follow the parent,” and they have placed bite-sized morsels of parenting nourishment in front of us starting with Prospective Parent Classes: As we waited for an opening, what a feast this was! Our plate was now piled high and we put our sights on the goal of becoming a Montessori family and home.

Our next step was to attend the classes offered by Deborah Fry: Redirecting Childrens’ Behavior. A six-week, 18-hour class that certainly helped fill our parenting toolbox - we have taken it several times (our retooling took a little longer). We are active members of her “after-class care group” also, which meets here at Post Oak. My goodness! Our parenting toolbox is in constant use! I must share just one tip that has certainly changed the “mood” of our home. We took her suggestion of writing a mission statement for our family and reading it each week in our family meeting— I must be honest; it sounded a tad hokey when we worked on it one night in bed after class. Let me tell you—I continue to get “goose flesh” when I hear read the words and we discuss our family’s purpose: as an individual, a family member and as a world citizen. Building respectful, resourceful, responsible children is a tall order and we have discovered we can do it best with lots of help. The families we met in these classes continue to inspire and encourage us; you are the icing on the cake! It was after one of these classes
in 2006 that we felt the courage that went with our existing love to adopt the infant that was currently in our home. You understand adoption (like public speaking) was never in my plans due to our retirement age. Retirement has been placed on hold as we enjoy the ride of our life. We feel a sadness for other 68-year-olds that don’t have an eight- and four-year-old in their home; right, it isn’t 24 hrs of fun, but darn close—we sure laugh a lot as we watch the “Montessori miracles” unfold on our personal Montessori journey with Post Oak.

Just last week I was present at the birth of the new Post Oak Girl Scout Troop meeting. The room was full of happy, eager faces so ready for this new adventure and I was happy to offer to be “grandma-on-call” when needed.

These are just a few of the perks of parenting at Post Oak. Thank you.

The first day of high school was one of the most nerve-racking days of my life. After being at The Post Oak School with only nine people in my class, going into a class of 160 was a big change. I didn’t know how I was supposed to get halfway across the entire campus in the same amount of time the Post Oak Middle School teachers gave us to get our books. I was almost late a couple of times, but by the end of the first week I knew exactly how much time it took to get to each class, and where I had to go. The homework was surprisingly easy. Going into high school I was expecting a TON of homework, but I did not have an overwhelming amount. I had more then I did at Post Oak, but the time management skills I learned helped, and have been a great skill to know going into high school.

Without time management and self discipline, I would struggle to finish all my homework in the evening, but I have Post Oak to thank for that. Making new friends was not difficult at all. I was nervous about not having any friends, but that turned out to be an irrational fear. I made new friends just walking down the hallway, being in classes, and playing sports. I realized I had the self-confidence to introduce myself to anyone, including the teachers. In the end, the transition to high school has been easy. All of my fears from the beginning were things that I see now I didn’t even have to worry about.
**Bearkats Cross Country**  
Oct. 9 Saturday  
@ Pin Oak Middle School  

Oct. 21 Thursday  
@ AOS Dolphin Dash  

We will take our school bus to all the meets except the Saturday meets; parents will be responsible for getting students to those meets.  

Go Bearkats!

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**Pediatricians Urged to Help Fight Nature-Deficit Disorder**

Reprinted from the American Academy of Pediatrics AAPConvergence.com

In a world where obesity is becoming more common among children who are tethered to televisions and computers, Richard Louv still goes to his special world in the woods — and he wants pediatricians to send their patients there to join him.

"In your practices, consider suggesting to parents that they get their kids into nature," Louv told a packed NCE plenary session Saturday. The author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder* and chairman of the Children & Nature Network, Louv has become a leading advocate for helping children rediscover nature.

Over the past few generations, the world of children has gradually constricted from miles from the doorstep to the doorstep itself. In that time, children have stopped exploring the world of woods, streams and parks to building worlds of animated characters and social networks, leading to the development of "nature-deficit disorder."

"In the last three decades, there has been a dramatic division between kids and nature. They are simply not going outside much any more, let alone into nature. Every generation has gotten closer to staying in the home. Today, children can hardly leave the stoop," Louv said adding that he understands the reasons for the change, which include security fears of parents and the growth of electronics.

"I'm careful not to demonize electronics," he said. "If the conversation gets stuck just on bemoaning the fact that kids spend a lot of time on the computer or on video games, it won't deal with other complex issues."

The most complex issue, he said is that "parents are scared to death."

"This fear of "stranger danger" is interesting. If you look at the statistics, you see that the number of stranger abductions has been going down for at least 20 years," Louv said. "The vast majority of abductions are not by strangers but by somebody the family knows."

Cable news networks take a handful of crimes against children and repeat them again and again, he said, fueling this fear until it "outdistances reality," he said.

As a child, Louv lived on the edges of suburbia and discovered his own "special place," a nearby woods where he often went with his dog.

"Those were my woods. I still sometimes go to those woods in my heart and find things there that I don't find somewhere else. You remember that place," Louv said, adding that world cannot allow those special places to go away forever.

Pediatricians can play a key role in reversing this trend and helping to combat nature-deficit disorder.

"Why do we need you? "You really are the giants," Louv said. "In your daily practices and daily lives, it's simply using your wisdom and your daily common sense to recommend to parents that kids go outside, whether it is to walk or ride a bike."

Pediatricians can help calm those fears of parents, and so he asked audience members to join the movement to help children connect with nature — for their own health.

"This is a person-to-person campaign. This is a cultural change," Louv said, and he suggested that pediatricians and families go the Children in Nature network website to learn more about the movement and to start Family Nature clubs.

"I'm not a radical about Ritalin," Louv said, adding that nature can have a calming effect on children. "How many kids are on Ritalin, when what they need to do is go outside and run around."

The line drew applause from the large crowd, and he closed by asking pediatricians for help in fighting nature-deficit disorder.

"In your practices, you can do more than the White House," Louv said. "You are the most important people in this movement."

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**The Toddler Dining Experience**

Enjoy a social hour filled with encouragement and tips from our faculty.

**October 28, 2010, 7:00–8:30 pm**

Hor d’oeuvres and beverages provided

RSVP to Mirani Smith (miranismith@postoakschool.org)
Parent Education

The Post Oak
Upper Elementary Experience
Thursday, October 14
7:00 pm
common room

For Primary and Elementary childcare, please call the front desk—$5 per child.

Becoming a Love and Logic Parent©

Post Oak Counselor Phylis Tomlinson presents “Becoming a Love and Logic Parent©” curriculum for Elementary age and beyond. The class will be given Thursdays from 9:00–10:30 am in the Post Oak multipurpose room (formerly called the reading room) on the following dates:

Sept. 16, 23, 30, & Oct. 14*
continuing Oct. 21, 28, Nov. 4 & 11

*Only the October 14 class will meet in the Tile Room—this is a change of date from October 7.

Topics include:
- The Two Rules of Love and Logic©
- Delayed or “Anticipatory” Consequences
- Using Empathy and Love and Logic One-Liners to Neutralize Arguing
- How to get more information about Love and Logic

This parenting program is designed to give you practical skills that can be used immediately.

These classes require pre-registration by calling Phylis at 713-661-6688 ext. 176.

Only costs: $10.

Embark on a Montessori Journey

online signup
limited space available

Montessori Journey dates:
- November 5, 2010 6:00–9:00 pm
- November 6, 2010 8:00 am–2:00 pm

Each year the faculty of Post Oak invite prospective and current parents to participate in Montessori Journey.

During this (adults only) two-day workshop, you will experience the five different classroom environments from Infant Community through Middle School, first as an observer and then as an active participant receiving lessons and working with classroom materials.

This workshop is a hands-on approach to understanding how and what your child is learning. Enrollment is limited to 40 people and the charge is $30 per person to cover the cost of food. Please complete the registration online through the link on the left side of our website.
CALENDAR

For more, visit www.postoakschool.org

ANNUAL FUND MONTH!
OCTOBER 10–16
Field Day tickets on sale all week

Mon
10/11
School Closed - no childcare
Columbus Day
Post Oak Employee Retreat

Tue-Fri
10/12-15
Individual school pictures

Wed
10/13
Green Team Meeting
12:30–1:30

Thu
10/14
Parent Education:
The Post Oak Upper
Elementary Experience
7:00 pm

Sat
10/16
Field Day
Family Event
10:00 am–1:00 pm

OCTOBER 17–23

Thu
10/21
Reception honoring
Susan Tracy
4:00–5:00 pm
Dad’s Club kick-off @
Travis Crabtree’s home
(see pg. 3) 7:00 pm

Fri
10/22
Conference Day
Classes not in session
No childcare except for
students with expanded-
year contracts

NOTICE BOARD

PAPERWORK DROP-OFF BASKET
DURING ALL ARRIVALS

If you have paperwork to drop off, you can
hand it to one of the people assisting with
arrivals and they will put it in a basket that gets
taken to the front office every morning. No
need to park! There are now drop-off baskets in
both the Primary and Elementary
arrivals lines.

Security update

Parents, please be
aware that the school
will never ask for credit
 card information
over the phone as
identification when
picking up a child.
We require written
notification and a
drivers’ license if the
person is not the one
who normally picks up
the child.

Reception to honor
former Half-Day
Infant Community
Teacher
Susan Tracy

Thursday
October 21
4:00–5:00 pm
Drop by the school to
visit with Susan and
wish her well.

ABOUT THE WEEKLY POST

The Weekly Post appears on most Fridays of the regular school year.
You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.

Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday before publication
to Communication Coordinator Shannon Neufeld (shannonneufeld@postoakschool.org). If publication is
on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 pm on the preceding Monday.

All photos in The Weekly Post are by Shannon Neufeld unless otherwise noted.
The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale
(AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS)
4600 Bissonnet, Bellaire, Texas 77401 • Telephone: 713-661-6688 • Fax: 713-661-4959 • www.postoakschool.org

Keep track of school events
with our online calendar—or
download a fresh copy of the
school’s printed calendar, all at
www.postoakschool.org